

Radar Range  
By Maura Campbell

100 Riverside Drive, Apt 2D  
New York, NY 10024  
802-578-4857  
Mauracampbell22@gmail.com

"A Doll's House" meets "Of Mice and Men" in this expressionistic crime noir thriller. Hank, a detective, is haunted by memories of his mother abandoning their family when he was five years old. He is having an affair with his partner Doreen, a woman who walked out on her family twenty-five years ago and never looked back. They investigate a routine mugging and discover that the dimwitted victim, Buddy, keeps a backyard full of rabbits, and the case takes a nasty turn. Inside the trunk of a car, the detectives find the strangled body of Buddy's roommate, Tom, the son Doreen hasn't seen in twenty-five years. Hank and Doreen attend his funeral where Hank meets Doreen's daughter Sarah, a beautiful angelic girl who will be drawn into the radar range of retribution, madness and murder.

#### CAST OF CHARACTERS

HANK	POLICEMAN	30s-40s
DOREEN	POLICEWOMAN, ALSO PLAYS HANK'S MOTHER	50s
BUDDY	SLOW-WITTED MAN, ALSO PLAYS HIS MOTHER, ALSO PLAYS SANTA CLAUS	20s
ACTOR 1	CITIZEN, MARRIAGE COUNSELOR, ANIMAL CONTROL #1, GARAGE OWNER, FATHER, MINISTER	Various
ACTOR 2	DISPATCH, BANK TELLER, WIFE, ANIMAL CONTROL #2, SARAH #1, CORONER, WOMAN IN RED DRESS, SARAH #2	

#### TIME

December. The present and memory

#### SETTING

Various scenes in a small, northern town.

NOTE: Character assignments for Actor 1 and Actor 2 are flexible, as are their genders, except for Sarah #2

## DEVELOPMENT

Staged reading, Hollins University, Roanoke, VA July 2007  
Staged reading, Fanatasy Theatre Factory, January 2018  
Finalist, 2017 Todd McNerney National Playwriting Contest

## MAURA CAMPBELL BIO

Maura Campbell is a playwright, screenwriter and director whose work has been produced all over the U.S. and abroad. Recent productions include *The Song of Bernadette Jones* (Hollins University-Mill Mountain Theatre Winter Festival of New Works, January 2018), *Seagull Invasion* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival, August 2017), *Dreamtime* (Maitland Rep, Maitland, Australia, March 2017), *Southern Flight* (Page to Stage, Roanoke, VA) and *Flower Duet* (Road Theatre, Los Angeles).

Recent playwriting awards include *Radar Range*, 2017 finalist for McNerney Playwriting Prize and *Seagull Invasion*, finalist for 2018 The Getchell Award. Her play *The Song of Bernadette Jones* was a 2018 semi-finalist for The Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference and the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. The play will premier in NYC at The Fresh Fruit Festival, July 2018, produced by Egg and Spoon Theatre Collective. Other upcoming productions include *Cross Talk*, New City Players, Fort Lauderdale, FL, spring 2019.

A native of Vermont, Campbell taught screenwriting and creative writing at Burlington College from 2000 to 2010 and has written and directed and produced several short films and multi-media projects. Campbell is founder of Fugitive Sister Productions in South Florida, creating feminist fueled stories for the stage and screen.

THE STREET

A city scene. Cold, dark and rainy. HANK wears a raincoat but nothing can keep out the chill in the air.

HANK

(to the audience)

December rain. The worst kind of weather. If the November storms hadn't blown all the leaves off the trees, this would do it. Aching for snow. Desperate for something to cover up the look of desolation.

A CITIZEN walks toward him.

CITIZEN

Evening, Officer.

HANK

(to the audience)

Christmas lights will go up in a few days. Usually by now... I'm a sucker for Christmas. That is, I get my hopes up every year and every year the same thing happens. Santa Claus doesn't come.

CITIZEN

Weather forecast calls for rain the next ten days. Rain! Ought to be illegal in December.

HANK

(to the audience)

My partner Doreen-

Officer Doreen Knutsen appears in a light.

HANK

(to audience)

-she's pretty, isn't she? In a certain light. We had a habit of patrolling the market at the end of our shift. On slow days. Like this day.

DOREEN

What's wrong with your face?

HANK

Nothing. I'm smiling.

DOREEN

Oh.

HANK

(to audience)

I used to imagine- just for the hell of it- that we were a married couple. A happily married couple. Strolling along the boulevard, nowhere special to be. Considering whether to buy that new set of dishes we had admired or maybe she'd like to try on that red dress in the window. Is that what normal couples do?

DOREEN

I'm getting a call-

Lights up on DISPATCH.

DISPATCH

(Static, static)... a robbery on North Ave, People's United Bank. Suspect is large build, white male, the bank teller described him as having strong arms. Security cameras disclose the car was a tan colored Chevy or maybe a Saturn, rusted on the driver's side.

DOREEN

This is Officer Knutsen, I copy.

HANK

(to the audience)

We drove to the bank, past a street of row houses spectacularly decorated for the holidays. They must have worked it out in advance, these neighbors, gotten together in August and agreed that their block would be the biggest and brightest-

DOREEN

Think how much electricity those fools are using. You getting out of the car or what?

THE BANK

BANK TELLER

Oh, it was just awful. I live in fear of this sort of thing and I just sort of panicked and gave him the money that's how we're trained, just give him the money. It's always a him. Well, sometimes the accomplice is a her, but in this case-

DOREEN

Just the details, please.

BANK TELLER

I remember his eyes. He had on a sort of a mask but his eyes... Well I hate to say this kind of thing. It's not exactly politically, whatever...

DOREEN

What about his eyes?

BANK TELLER

Kind of dumb. Kind of a dumbbell, would be my guess.

HANK

There's a surveillance video.

BANK TELLER

Well he was wearing a mask, but he was big and I mean really big.

HANK

How much did they get?

BANK TELLER

Course, somebody drove the car-

HANK

How much?

BANK TELLER

Fifteen thousand. I haven't counted yet but that's about what I keep in the drawer.

DOREEN

You okay?

BANK TELLER

No! Thanks for asking. Are you going to dust for prints?

HANK

Yeah. All that.

BANK TELLER

This going to take long? It's my bowling night. Shot a 220 last week.

Bank Teller mimes throwing a ball  
down the lane.

Strike!

HANK

(to audience)

We were working a double, Doreen and me. Shit. I was already late to an appointment with my wife.

(to Doreen)

Probably take an hour.

DOREEN

(to Hank)

Say hello to your wife for me.

HANK

It's just a thing. Nothing. I'll be back and then-  
(to audience)

Then we'll finish our shift. Then we'll go to a motel like we always did after I saw the marriage counselor, after my wife explained to me once again the crimes I had committed against humanity.

BANK TELLER

(still bowling)

There's something I forgot to tell, something that just came on me.

HANK

Okay, what is it?

BANK TELLER

He smelled funny.

HANK

Smelled?

BANK TELLER

Yeah, like I don't know grass or something. I think maybe he's a farmer, kind of a grassy manure smell. In fact I can't seem to get the smell out of my nose.

HANK

We'll make a note of it.

BANK TELLER

Grassy manure.

HANK

(to Doreen)

I'll be back by six-thirty.

THE MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

HANK

(to the audience)

We had our weekly with the marriage counselor. Trouble is that couples often don't go to counseling until they absolutely hate each other.

WIFE

(TO BABYSITTER)

Julia? Julia, thanks for coming over. Yes, dinner. We won't be too late. If you could make sure the kids brush their teeth... Yes, it was sweet of Hank. Dinner out on a Tuesday!

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

If you'll both sit down. Preferably, yes, next to each other. That didn't go too well last week but let's try it again.

HANK

I'm game if she's game.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

I'm going to ask you both a question. The same question.

HANK

Great. She'll get it right and I'll get it wrong.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

There is no right and wrong here. There is only willingness and honesty. Let the chips fall!

HANK

(to audience)

Whatever that meant.

(to Marriage Counselor)

What's the question?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Tell me- Mrs. Bierman. Tell me about the first time you met your husband.

WIFE

What do you want to know?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Whatever you want to tell me. Did you like him?

WIFE

Like him? I didn't know him.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Okay.

WIFE

I thought he was good looking.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Uh huh. Do you remember what you talked about? Or what you did?

WIFE

We went to a restaurant. I think the fish place over by the interstate. Went out of business a few years later.

HANK

(to audience)

We did go to that fish place but not on our first date.



WIFE

I seem to remember Hank choking on a bone.

HANK

(to audience)

I remember she sat there watching me gag.

WIFE

How do you choke on a fish bone?

HANK

I almost died. You sat there and watched me turn blue.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Oh, dear.

HANK

What?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Nothing.

WIFE

Nothing's ever nothing.

HANK

(to audience)

The question was a test and like all tests in this marriage-

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Like I said, nothing is either right or wrong.

HANK

(to audience)

-the chips just continued to fall.

WIFE

I want you to move out.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

So, same time next week?

WIFE

(to babysitter)

Julia, Julia, thank you so much, yes I know it's early. Guess we were both just tired! Julia, darling one day you'll be married and have a family? Let me give you some advice. Marry a woman.

## THE HO-HUM MOTEL

HANK

(to the audience)

I found Doreen sitting at the station eating out of a container of Chinese.

DOREEN

Here. Have a bite.

She holds up some noodles between chopsticks. He opens his mouth.

DOREEN

It's been dead the last hour. One of those nights.

HANK

I drove by the Ho Hum on my way back here. Saw a few shady character loitering. Want to take a run over there/

DOREEN

Sure.

HANK

(to audience)

The Ho Hum was a motel on Williston Road. Not very well lit. And there was a garage behind it. I paid the motel manager fifty dollars a month to let me park there, no questions.

Doreen and Hank get partially undressed.

DOREEN

How was your appointment?

HANK

Stimulating.

They make love.

HANK

(to audience)

I had never actually seen Doreen naked before. We were always in a hurry, she rarely even let me kiss her.

DOREEN

I don't want you... on me like that.

HANK

Like this?

Lights up on Dispatch.

DISPATCH

(through static)

We've got a 150 at Battery Street Garage, repeat, 150 at Battery Street Garage...

HANK

(to audience)

Mugging in a parking garage. Doreen brought her radio into the motel room with us. Natch.

(to Doreen- almost coming)

Jesus!

DOREEN

Get dressed.

Hank tries to hang on.

HANK

We've got fifteen minutes left on our shift! Sully and Mike can take it-

DOREEN

Come on!

Hank and Doreen pull themselves together.

HANK

(to audience)

There is nothing more depressing than a parking garage, urine stains on the concrete walls, drunks huddled in the stairwells, and usually one lone sorry son-of-a-bitch who can't find his car.

THE PARKING GARAGE

Buddy cowers against a wall.

HANK

(to audience)

Doreen got out of the cruiser and was all over this guy like white on rice. By the time I caught up with her, sh was already talking to him; trying to- he was shaken up. She had this way with people. Buddy, that was his name.

DOREEN

Why don't you tell me what happened?

BUDDY

They took my new iPhone and my wallet. They were mean. I just bought it.

DOREEN  
 (to Buddy)  
 Are you hurt? Do you need a ride anywhere?

BUDDY  
 Where are my keys, where are my keys? I lost my apartment keys.

DOREEN  
 It's okay, they probably fell out when you took out your wallet. We'll find them.

HANK  
 (to audience)  
 The guy he was, well, I hate to put it like this-

BUDDY  
 I have to go home.

DOREEN  
 It's going to be all right.

Buddy grabs Doreen's arm.

BUDDY  
 I have pets.

HANK  
 (to audience)  
 Kind of slow. Dumb. A dumbbell we would have called him in school.

DOREEN  
 Please let go of me.

BUDDY  
 I have to find my keys.

DOREEN  
 Sir, you're...

HANK  
 Let go of her.

BUDDY  
 Sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I didn't... sorry, I'm sorry.

DOREEN  
 It's all right.

HANK  
 Stand away.

BUDDY

I'm sorry.

HANK

I can arrest you for assaulting an officer.

BUDDY

Sorry.

DOREEN

He didn't, he's just upset.

HANK

You'd better learn to keep your hands to yourself, young man.

BUDDY

Sorry.

DOREEN

All right. It's all right. Can't you see anything? Let's look for your keys.

BUDDY

They were in my pocket.

DOREEN

Do you have a car?

BUDDY

Huh?

DOREEN

A car. Do you drive?

BUDDY

No. I took the test but I didn't pass.

DOREEN

Come on. Get in the squad car. We'll give you a lift. I said we'll drive you. Come on.

THE POLICE CRUISER

Marriage Counselor climbs in the back.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Move over.

HANK

What are you doing?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Riding in the back.

HANK

You are not coming with us.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Have you called your wife?

HANK

Jesus Christ. I forgot.

DOREEN

What?

HANK

(to Doreen)

What's his address?

DOREEN

24 North Winooski. Turn left. Do you live alone, Buddy?

BUDDY

I have a roommate, Tom. Do you want to see a picture? Tom is my best friend. We're going to open a pizzeria.

DOREEN

Pizzeria takes a lot of money.

BUDDY

Fifteen thousand dollars.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

I was hoping you'd make some progress since our last session. When was the last time you had sex?

BUDDY

That's what Tom said. He said if we got fifteen thousand...

HANK

Yesterday- today-

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

I meant with your wife.

HANK

Oh.

DOREEN

Do you like pizza, Buddy?

BUDDY

I like to make the dough. I like the way it feels when you knead it.

Buddy and Doreen get out of the car.

HANK

Where are you going?

DOREEN

We can't just leave him.

HANK

The hell we can't-

Hank gets out of the car and follows them.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

It's not too late!

HANK

FOR WHAT???

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

To call your wife. What did you think I meant?

BUDDY

Do you like rabbits?

BUDDY'S PLACE

Rabbits, rabbits everywhere.

HANK

(to the audience)

In the back yard, if you can call it a yard. A space, maybe twenty by twenty. There were cages...

BUDDY

(to the rabbits)

You hungry?

HANK

(to the audience)

And cages and cages and cages of-

BUDDY

I started with two and I didn't know that they were both going to have babies.

DOREEN

Buddy, you can't have all these rabbits... You simply cannot have...

BUDDY

You want to feel one? This is Alice. I named her Alice because of Alice in Wonderland. See? She has a black spot on her nose.

DOREEN

(peering in the window)

Hank! Dear God, there's more inside!

BUDDY

Do you want to hold her? She's very, very soft.

DOREEN

Do you keep a key outside, Buddy?

HANK

(to the audience)

Those keys, if he hadn't lost the keys. If we had never brought him home.

Doreen discovers a pile of rabbit corpses.

DOREEN

Oh god...

The Marriage Counselor suddenly appears.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

People have a sort of radar for each other.

BUDDY

They got old and this one ate her babies. I tried to stop her.

DOREEN

Hank, do something-

HANK

I'll make a phone call-

DOREEN

Buddy, get in the car.

BUDDY

But I need to go inside-

DOREEN

Get in the car! Hank, get in the car.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

For example, something attracted you to this poor slob with the rabbits.



HANK

(to Marriage Counselor)

Shut up! I'm just doing my job.

BUDDY

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Can I just feed them before we go? I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

DOREEN

Where is your family? Do you have a mother, a father, a sister, a guardian!

BUDDY

Yes... I- I- I- I-

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

At any point you could have passed him off to someone else. Fifteen minutes left on your shift, remember?

DOREEN

Who the hell is looking after you? This is insane. This is the most disgraceful mess I have ever seen. You cannot keep animals like this, it's cruel. Do you know that Buddy? It's cruel.

BUDDY

I'm nice to them, I would never, never-

DOREEN

Just drive to the station, just drive.

BUDDY

What about my rabbits?

DOREEN

Just get in the car!

BUDDY

I didn't lock the fence. I forgot to lock it. There are dogs- I need to lock the gate- Alice is in there!

HANK

Drive around the block, get him out of here!

Doreen and Buddy exit.

HANK

(to the audience)

The neighborhood dogs broke through the fence moments after we left. They had been waiting for the chance.

The SOUND OF SNARLING AND  
YAPPING.

Hank fires a few bullets into the air- the SOUND OF DOGS crying and running away.

HANK

(to the audience)

I called animal control.

Animal Control 1 and 2 enter.

ANIMAL CONTROL 1

Tyvek suits, gloves, masks, brace yourselves ladies and gentlemen, this is going to be bad. Three hundred forty-two rabbits-

Animal Control 2 looks in a window.

ANIMAL CONTROL 2

Hoo-boy. And that doesn't count the rabbits inside the house. Hoo-wee!

Breaks a window with their foot and crawls inside.

ANIMAL CONTROL 1

(holds up a pelt)

One rabbit pelt formerly known as Alice, and three garbage containers with carcasses. Whew, this one has been here a while- where are you?

ANIMAL CONTROL 2

Okay here's the final count inside the house... eight hundred sixteen alive. Kind of hard to get a count on the carcasses, what with decay. Some of them had actually petrified onto the floor but here's a good estimate.

HANK

Can you do something?

ANIMAL CONTROL 1

You mean... euthanize?

(to Animal Control 2)

He wants to know if we can euthanize!

ANIMAL CONTROL 2

We can euthanize! We live to euthanize!

Animal Control 1 and 2 produce syringes from their pockets.

ANIMAL CONTROL 1

Just call me Ready Eddy!

THE POLICE CRUISER

Hank walks back to the cruiser.

DOREEN  
Everything okay?

HANK  
Everything's great.  
(Hank throws up.)  
Indigestion.

DOREEN  
Looks like blood.

HANK  
I had a tooth extracted. Still a little raw.

DOREEN  
Buddy, is there someone we can call?

BUDDY  
About what?

DOREEN  
A friend, someone you can stay with.

BUDDY  
Well, I live with Tom.

DOREEN  
What's his last name?

BUDDY  
Well, he's not here right now.

DOREEN  
(to Hank)  
We're going to have to get him a room for the night. Think there's a bed at the shelter? Buddy, you must have one friend we could call, one relative.

Marriage Counselor enters.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
So when was the last time you had sex?

HANK  
Are you still here?

DOREEN  
You can't go back home, Buddy.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
This partner of yours... anything going on there?

HANK  
She's old enough to be my mother.

DOREEN  
I said you can't go back home.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
Ah!

BUDDY  
But my rabbits-

HANK  
What do you mean, ah?

DOREEN  
You can't take care of them.

BUDDY  
Why?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
Your wife mentioned something about nightmares, you crying out in the middle of the night-

DOREEN  
You can't take care of them. Someone is coming to find homes for them.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
Strange, though. This Doreen? Not exactly the maternal type.

BUDDY  
They're my rabbits. They're soft rabbits, my friends.

DOREEN  
They're all going to go to good homes.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
But she's got a radar for you.

BUDDY  
But I'll be alone.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
What does she want from you, Hank?

HANK  
(to Doreen)  
You want to get a drink after this?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Ninety-eight percent accuracy.

HANK

What?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Which marriages will make it and which one's won't. I can predict them within ninety-eight percent.

HANK

And?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

When I ask them to describe the first time they met. What was it your wife remembered? A bone in your throat. Times running out, Hank.

Marriage Counselor exits.

HANK

Let's go.

Traveling.

BUDDY

Could I at least keep Alice?

DOREEN

No. I mean the drink, yes, no Alice doesn't... do you know Tom's phone number?

BUDDY

Hm...

DOREEN

Perhaps you have it written down somewhere. Maybe in your pocket?

Buddy looks but pulls a squirt gun out of his pocket.

BUDDY

Don't think so.

DOREEN

What's this?

BUDDY

Squirt gun. I play with it.

DOREEN

It's probably not a good idea to play with any kind of gun, Buddy, unless you're at home.

BUDDY

Can I go home now?

DOREEN

No, Buddy you can't go home. Think Buddy, is there someone... where are you parents?

BUDDY

My mother, well, she's not usually in a good mood so I wouldn't go and bother her.

DOREEN

Does she live nearby?

BUDDY

Well...

DOREEN

What's her address?

HANK

(to the audience)

Turns out she lived in the same neighborhood. Three streets over on Williams and she didn't have any rabbits.

BUDDY

Please, don't tell her nothing about Tom.

DOREEN

What would I tell her about Tom?

BUDDY

You won't tell my mother I'm in trouble?

DOREEN

You're not in any trouble.

BUDDY

She'll get mad if she thinks I'm in trouble.

HANK

Why would you be in trouble?

BUDDY

I don't know.

DOREEN

We're just giving you a ride home.

BUDDY

That's her house.

DOREEN

Whoa.

BUDDY

Scary, huh?

(Buddy shudders)

You never met my mother? Loop de loop!

MOTHER'S HOUSE

MOTHER

(offstage)

Gawd dabble, you give me the fright of my life! If I live to be a hundred, I'll never get used to the sight of you-

BUDDY

(offstage)

I'm not in any trouble- these people are my friends-

The SOUND OF A SMACK.

MOTHER

(offstage)

You're lying and you're lying! Gawd dabble, I'm tired of all this drama.

MOTHER enters.

MOTHER

What's he done now? Come on out with it. I'm not paying a red cent for anything. Why did you bring him here?

HANK

(to audience)

She was two fifty maybe three hundred pounds.

MOTHER

(calls to Buddy)

You stay out of the fridge, do you hear me?

HANK

(to audience)

And there certainly weren't any rabbits in her house.

MOTHER

Go on Mittens, scat scat! I'm tired of you.

HANK

(to audience)

But there were cats. Big cats, black cats, yellow cats, striped cats, litters of cats, stuffed cats, cats salt and pepper shakers...

MOTHER

I got this one in Niagara Falls. Look it's a cat in a barrel.

MOTHER

What are you touching?

HANK

Sorry?

MOTHER

You're not to touch nothing.

DOREEN

Buddy can't go back to his house.

MOTHER

What and you think he's going to stay here? I don't give a rat's ass about that house. I did my job, I raised him.

DOREEN

Are there any other relatives?

MOTHER

Hah!

DOREEN

Or friends...

MOTHER

He's burned those bridges, him and that Tom. Where is that loafer? Fluffy, Fluffy come here come to mama! Do you have any cats, I mean kids?

DOREEN

No.

MOTHER

So you don't know. You don't know what it's like. Well I can tell you it's one big disappointment.

(banging noises offstage)

Are you on the counter top? You stay out off that counter top, there's nothing up there for you!

(to Hank and Doreen)

He ate me out of house and home and that Tom, oh he's a charmer all right.

HANK

It would be helpful if you'd let him stay until he can make other arrangements.

MOTHER

Oh, Gawd dabble, what the hay.

(more commotion offstage.)

Mother exits)

What are you up to in there, young man? I told you not to-



BUDDY

(offstage)

You've got Cap'n Crunch up there and I know you don't want it-

MOTHER

(offstage)

I feed that to the birds, you nincompoop, that's how I attract them to feed the cats. What's the matter with you?

Buddy runs from the kitchen with the box of Cap'n Crunch and exits. A loop-de-loop ensues, Buddy disappearing into a room, Mother following, loop-de-loop.

BUDDY

You can't catch me!

MOTHER

I'll beat the tar out of you, boy!

HANK

(to audience, over the mayhem)

Doreen looked as though she might faint.

BUDDY

Whew!

MOTHER

You think this is funny? Give me that Cap'n Crunch!

DOREEN

(to Hank, desperately)

Will you stay with me tonight?

DOREEN'S PLACE

HANK

(to the audience)

We took Buddy to a motel. Doreen insisted on paying for a room.

BUDDY

It's got a bathroom and a refrigerator!

HANK

(to audience)

I'd never been to Doreen's house before. We only went to motels for quickies, although once we fell asleep and woke up in the morning. I remember reaching for her. In the dim light with her face half-hidden in the pillow, she looked young and I saw what she must have been like once.

DOREEN

Do you want something to drink?

HANK  
What do you have?

DOREEN  
Everything.

HANK  
(to the audience)  
I guess I never wondered what her place would look like. It's just not the kind of thing that goes through my mind but when we got there I couldn't help but notice-

DOREEN  
How about Scotch?

HANK  
(to the audience)  
It was as if nobody lived there, a couch, a television, books that looked like somebody had bought in a box at a yard sale and put them on the shelves. But no pictures, no knickknacks.

DOREEN  
Do you like it with ice?

HANK  
You. Just you.  
(to the audience)  
I took her clothes off and carried her into the bedroom and laid her on the bed. I was running my hand down her stomach. She's ever so slim but there is this little bulge. I had never noticed it before.

DOREEN  
Don't touch me there.

HANK  
What... what is it?

DOREEN  
Just don't touch me.

HANK  
Is it a scar? Oh.

DOREEN  
Oh? What do you mean, oh?

HANK  
Nothing.

DOREEN  
It's a scar, I'm scarred.

Okay.

HANK

DOREEN  
How could she? How could Buddy's mother?

HANK  
It's a rough world. Let's don't worry about Buddy. Come back here-

DOREEN  
I almost died.

HANK  
You what?

DOREEN  
In childbirth. This is a Cesarean. The doctor waited and waited and I almost died. That's why it looks like this and then it almost didn't heal.

HANK  
Were you very young?

DOREEN  
You have no idea.

HANK  
When my wife had our first daughter-

DOREEN  
I don't care. I don't want to hear about birth stories. I'm just telling you why I look like that. Every time I look in the mirror, after I shower, that's what I see and I hate it I hate it I hate it-

HANK  
Sh.

DOREEN  
I hate it.

HANK  
Sh.

Doreen lies down and covers herself.

HANK  
(to the audience)  
It's interesting what you see in people when they aren't aware they are being watched. Doreen fell asleep later, turned toward me, and as the light faded from the room her face started telling me a story.

So she was a mother, had been a mother, I knew that now, but I could see tenderness there, something rich and deep. Her face reflected the face or faces of her children. I could see that she had known them. The tenderness I felt, perhaps I mean the pain, was so deep. I knew nothing about her but what she showed me in the dying light of day, surrendered and surrounded by soft sheets, and it was more than I had ever known about anybody.

Later...

What time is it? DOREEN

It's eight I think. HANK

Oh wow. DOREEN

You hungry? HANK

I guess. Is it morning? DOREEN

No, still night. Still... now. HANK

I was dreaming. DOREEN

Uh huh. HANK

About rabbits, I think. I think there were rabbits. DOREEN

Not surprising. HANK

Poor, poor creatures. DOREEN

HANK  
(to the audience)  
But she wasn't thinking about the rabbits.

DOREEN  
I wish I had never seen them.

HANK  
(to the audience)  
And then she was suddenly embarrassed.

DOREEN

Do you mind? Hand me that.

HANK

(to the audience)

She went into the bathroom, so I did what anybody would do. I turned on the light and looked around the room. It was neat except for a few blouses hanging on a chair, a secret vice; she was a little bit messy. The shower came on. I got up from her Swedish bed, an indulgence, she loved a comfortable bed, big down puffy comforters, even a few feathers floating here and there. I went to the window and pulled the shade. There on the window sill was a cloth doll and a cloth pony. Someone had sewn them and not recently and then I heard her voice-

DOREEN

It's part of my punishment.

HANK

What is?

DOREEN

Please don't touch them.

HANK

Sorry.

DOREEN

I haven't seen my children in twenty-five years. I keep these dolls so that the pain never completely fades.

HANK

Like the scar.

DOREEN

No, the scar is who I am. The toys, the children, they are outside of me.

HANK

Do you want to-

DOREEN

What's to say, I abandoned my children. I walked out of the house when they were five and seven, left them with my husband and for all I know they are married or dead.

HANK

But surely they would love to see you.

DOREEN

What about your kids?

HANK

They hate me. For not walking out.

DOREEN  
Don't touch my dolls ever again.

HANK  
Sorry.

DOREEN  
I'd like you to go.

HANK  
Sorry.

DOREEN  
Stop saying you're sorry.

HANK  
Sorry.

DOREEN  
Aah.

HANK  
Damn.

DOREEN  
Just come here.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
She's sending you mixed signals.

HANK  
You think I don't know that?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
She wants you, she hates you, she wants you, she hates you.  
What was your relationship with your mother like?

DOREEN  
Take that off.

HANK  
No more talk about mothers.

DOREEN  
Okay.

They make love.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR  
This is a great opportunity for you to get to the bottom of why you're cheating on your wife. Look, you can't build a relationship on sex. It's thin. It's superficial. How long did you know your wife before you jumped in the sack?

I don't know.

HANK

Shut up.

DOREEN

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

She just told you the biggest secret of her life. It's called a bid for intimacy. What about your secret? How about your own mother, hm? Isn't there something you might want to share?

DOREEN

Don't turn on the light.

HANK

I want to see you.

DOREEN

No, and I'm old.

HANK

You're not old.

DOREEN

I'm old. This is crazy. You're young enough to be my son.

HANK

And I've already ruined my life.

DOREEN

So what do you want with me?

HANK

I don't know, maybe the truth.

DOREEN

I already told you the truth. I left my children.

HANK

I don't believe you. I don't believe it's that simple.

DOREEN

Oh, an idealist.

HANK

Maybe.

DOREEN

Or a savior. You want to save me, Hank. Is that what you want to do?

HANK

Maybe I'm the one that needs saving.

DOREEN

Oh that's rich. That's really, really-

HANK

I know what I saw when you were sleeping. I saw the tenderness, the regret. I know you're carrying a lot of pain. Look I'm just a cop with an bleeding ulcer who's on the verge of being thrown out of his house.

DOREEN

So we're alike.

HANK

Is that so bad?

DOREEN

Maybe together we can heal each other, is that it?

HANK

No. Yes. What I mean is that you need someone, I need someone.

DOREEN

You want the truth? Okay, here's the truth. I woke up one morning Christmas eve. The presents weren't wrapped because I hadn't bought them yet. I hadn't bought them because I didn't have any money to buy them, so I got my paycheck and cashed it and went to the Sears store and picked out the first twenty things I saw. By midnight the kids were in bed, the tree was trimmed, I had even made cookies for, god's sake. I got into bed and realized I didn't have the slightest idea what I had bought or whose name I had written on the wrapping paper and I went into their bedrooms but found them sleeping together, looking like little angels and I wanted to put a pillow to their faces and smother the life out of them and I don't mean for a moment, I don't mean for a minute. I had to go downstairs and drink a glass of scotch and so I put on my coat and I walked out the door and I have never ever looked back is that enough truth for you.

HANK

That's enough truth for me.

DOREEN

So now we know each other.

HANK

Does that mean we can have sex again? If that means we can have sex again-

DOREEN

I'm old enough to be your mother.



HANK

I know.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Hoo boy.

Morning...

HANK

(to the audience)

We were eating breakfast when I got a call about an abandoned car from the city garage. The tow truck driver noticed that it matched the description of the getaway car from the bank robbery. I wanted to go by myself. She seemed upset still, whether by the rabbits, that poor pathetic Buddy or her own demons, I couldn't be sure.

DOREEN

I'd like to take a look.

HANK

The station is on the way. I'll drop you off and take a run over-

DOREEN

I said I want to go.

THE CITY GARAGE

GARAGE OWNER enters.

GARAGE OWNER

Dollars to donuts this is the getaway car. Wow, do you suppose a TV crew is going to show up? Funny him leaving the car in a parking garage. What kind of dumbbell would do that? I'll bet the bank robber is still here. I'll bet he lives in the North End. Can't believe he'd leave the car behind like that. Who's name is on it?

DOREEN

Do you have something to get the door open?

GARAGE OWNER

(tears the door off its hinge)

Stand back, there you go.

HANK

Check the glove compartment.

DOREEN

I know my job.

HANK  
There a registration.

DOREEN  
Got it.

HANK  
Okay, we're going to impound this vehicle. Do you have an open bay?

GARAGE OWNER  
I can clear one for you.

HANK  
You got the registration?

DOREEN  
I told you I've got it.

GARAGE OWNER  
Anything else you need?

HANK  
A team will show up later to take the car apart.

GARAGE OWNER  
This the car you're looking for?

HANK  
We don't know.

GARAGE OWNER  
Cause if this is the car, it's one sorry ass car. You can kind of tell why someone driving this car would rob a bank. I mean, look at it.

DOREEN  
Thanks for your help.

GARAGE OWNER  
Bad smell in here. Kind of grassy, manure smell. Almost like-

HANK  
(to audience)  
Death.

DOREEN  
There's no registration.

HANK  
Course not. What was in there?

DOREEN  
Fast food menus, napkins, I've got it all here.

HANK

We can run it for fingerprints.

DOREEN

The car is probably stolen.

HANK

(to Garage Owner)

Can you pop the trunk?

(to audience)

If we hadn't spent the night, we wouldn't have been on this call together.

Garage Owner opens the trunk.

DOREEN

Oh no...

GARAGE OWNER

Now that is what I call dead. The television crews are going to want to get a load of this. Why is his face all purple?

DOREEN

This is Officer Knutsen... we're at the city parking lot... we've got a body...

HANK

(to the audience)

Sometimes you feel like you're on a runaway train. It's just a feeling. You're going fast and you feel the track underneath. So you feel this false sense of security but trains don't just run away, they're on a track to somewhere, even if that somewhere is a cliff or in this case another runaway train coming from the other direction. That's life. That's the way it is. You can't change that sort of thing. It changes you.

(on the radio)

White, male maybe twenty-five years old, black hair, medium build... I'd say recently in the last forty-eight hours... ten four.

GARAGE OWNER

You think this is the bank robber? How the hell did he get in the trunk of that car in the parking garage? I know this must have been the getaway driver. They always work in teams. Ever since Butch Cassidy and Sundance? You know how that ended. Hey, you throwing up blood? That's gross.

HANK

It just happens sometimes.

GARAGE OWNER

Stress, I'll bet. Don't know how you do it. Criminals, wife beaters, suicides, all the loser comes your way. It's a dirty job, ha ha. Someone's got to do it.

Garage Owner exits. Hank looks at Doreen.

HANK

What's that?

DOREEN

What's what?

HANK

In your pocket. What did you put in your pocket?

DOREEN

Nothing.

HANK

I saw you. It was in that envelope. You took it out of the glove compartment.

DOREEN

I was just wiping my hand.

HANK

Doreen... What is...

DOREEN

What does it look like?

HANK

It looked like...

(to the audience)

A rabbit's foot.

HANK'S CHILDHOOD

A Christmas memory...

HANK

(to audience)

I haven't mentioned it was Christmas. Well, almost Christmas. It had been a mild December but that day we were in the city parking lot looking at the strangled man, it started to snow. I have a hard time in December, no wonder my ulcer was acting up. The last time I ever saw my mother was Christmas eve. I was seven years old. She put me and my sister to bed like every night. But it was, of course, Christmas.

DOREEN  
(as his mother)  
Hank, Sarah look at the time.

HANK  
What, what it's only seven thirty!

DOREEN  
You know you'll be up at five.

SARAH 1  
We want to stay up! We want to stay up!

DOREEN  
Come on, put on your pajamas and I'll read you a story.

SARAH 1  
Rudolph! Tell Rudolph, Rudolph!

DOREEN  
Sh sh, your father is in the study. We mustn't disturb him.

HANK  
He's doing his work, isn't he mother?

DOREEN  
Yes, you know he works very hard.

HANK  
One day I'm going to work in the bank with him. He's already told me that I must start at the bottom, but I'll work very hard and one day I'll be running things.

DOREEN  
Your father is a wonderful man.

SARAH 1  
He adores us.

DOREEN  
And so do I.

HANK  
And we adore you and father.

DOREEN  
God has been good.

HANK  
Why are you crying, mother?

DOREEN

I'm not crying. I'm happy. One day you'll have children of your own and you'll discover that joy has many different sides.

SARAH 1

And some of them make you cry?

HANK

I'm always going to protect you.

DOREEN

What do you mean, protect me? It's my job to protect you.

HANK

Yes, but you're a girl and girls need protection.

SARAH 1

I'm not afraid of a bear.

HANK

(Roar!)

SARAH 1

Mother, make him stop!

DOREEN

Now, stop. There are no bears here. Well, not anywhere they can get at you and it's Christmas. You must only think of reindeer and presents and the big meal you are going to have tomorrow.

SARAH 1

Are we having a goose?

DOREEN

Yes, we are. I've made it. All Mrs. Henry needs to do is put it in the oven. Everything's ready for tomorrow so that anyone, with a little bit of help, can make the most wonderful Christmas meal possible. One that you will always remember.

HANK

I remember every minute with you. Every single thing you do and say. If I wasn't your son, when I grow up, I would marry you.

SARAH 1

Hank's going to marry mommy, Hank's going to marry mommy...

DOREEN

Now you're both silly. Hank will grow up and marry whoever he likes. She might not even live here.

HANK

Well, she better because I'm going to work at the bank.

DOREEN

Perhaps you'll meet her at college and she'll move here.

HANK

I suppose it's possible, but father says that girls like to live near their families so I'll probably marry Louisa or Carole.

SARAH 1

Ha ha!

HANK

Don't say anything about that. I haven't asked them.

SARAH 1

I'm going to marry Bruce and how do I know, because he has already asked me.

DOREEN

You'll both have wonderful lives. I just know it.

SARAH 1

Let's not talk about happiness anymore. It just makes mommy cry.

HANK

Are we very rich, Mother?

DOREEN

Your father has worked very hard and the bank is doing well.

HANK

Is Santa bringing me a train in that case?

DOREEN

I wouldn't know and I wouldn't say. Oh, there's someone at the door. Now listen children, I want you to remember something.

HANK

Yes?

DOREEN

I love you very, very much no matter what happens.

SARAH 1

What's going to happen?

HANK

Sh!

DOREEN

Nothing's going to happen, but sometimes I just like to say these kinds of things because it's Christmas...

(She walks over to the door  
and listens outside- now  
afraid)

...and I feel my love and responsibility towards you even more. If I should have to go away to help someone, for example, if a friend was in need and I had to go away and help them and you had to stay here and help your father-

HANK

I understand.

DOREEN

Do you?

HANK

Yes, we're not always going to be children and we can't just think of ourselves. We have to think of others.

DOREEN

Something like that and you must always think of your sister.

HANK

I'll protect her.

DOREEN

That's a man's job.

DOREEN

Now close your eyes and go to sleep and when you open them it will be Christmas. There you go kisses. (Kisses kisses)

They close their eyes. Doreen  
picks up a cloth doll and cloth  
pony and exits.

SARAH 1

Do you think Santa really will come?

HANK

Why wouldn't he come?

SARAH 1

Jill says he doesn't come to her house.

HANK

That's because she's Jewish. Jews don't like Christmas.

HANK

Sh!



SARAH 1  
What?

HANK  
I think mommy and daddy are talking and I want to hear.

SARAH 1  
What are they saying?

HANK  
Sh!

SARAH 1  
Are they talking about Christmas?

HANK  
I think so.

SARAH 1  
I'm expecting a bake oven. Not a real one, a pretend one because my dolls get hungry and I don't want to give them mommy's cookies, they're too big. The bake oven comes with sandwiches and cakes that are the right size and I'm getting a new red dress, I know because I heard Mommy talking.

HANK  
Don't you yell at her! Don't you say that!

SARAH 1  
Maybe we're not getting any presents after all. Maybe we're just going to get handmade things like last year.

HANK  
She's the best mother in the whole world. You just stop it. When I grow up I'm going to kill him.

SARAH 1  
You're going to kill daddy?

HANK  
We're going to go live in another town.

SARAH 1  
Tonight?

HANK  
Yes, get dressed.

SARAH 1  
But how are we going to do that?

HANK  
We just are. Get dressed.

SARAH 1

Okay, but how will Santa know where to bring the presents?

HANK

Don't worry about Santa. Just get dressed.

SARAH 1

It's cold out. Look it's snowing. Do we have to move tonight?

HANK

You're going to have to be brave.

SARAH 1

I don't know how.

HANK

Yes you do. Just pretend that we're on a mission like the people that go to Africa.

SARAH 1

Is that where we're going?

HANK

No, just to Owensville to our cousins house. I know how to get there. Put on your socks and boots though because it's a long walk.

SARAH 1

How are we going to walk to Owensville? It's already past our bedtimes. Can't we just go in the morning after we open our presents? Maybe daddy won't be so happy then and we can stay.

HANK

He makes mother sad, that's why she was crying. He says things that hurt her and I'm going to kill him one day.

SARAH 1

Now we're all going to hell. Look! Look!

HANK

What?

SARAH 1

Mommy, is that mommy outside? She's walking to Owensville. Please, please don't go, don't go!

HANK

Mother... Mom... Mommy!

DOREEN

(from far away)

Go back to bed.

HANK

No, it's... it's the storm... there's a storm... where are you... what are you...

DOREEN

Listen to me... listen...

HANK

Stop... please...

DOREEN

Go back in the house and go to bed.

FATHER enters.

FATHER

It'll be all right in the morning. You'll see. A sick friend. She hates to go, she'll be back after breakfast, she said. Come in, come back in please. Please, please it's Christmas. Everything is going to be all right.

Father exits.

SARAH 1

Hank, are you going to sleep with me?

FATHER

Of course he is. Go on up. Go on, I'll be up.

SARAH 1

Will you tell me a story? Mommy forgot to tell us. She was going to tell the Rudolph one.

HANK

I don't care about Rudolph and I don't care about you.

SARAH 1

You're the meanest brother who ever lived. Where's my doll? It was right here with your pony. I can't sleep without it. Did Mommy take it? Why would Mommy take it? Hank- Hank, why are you crying?

HANK

Because I'm happy.

THE MORGUE

HANK

(to the audience)

Doreen and I went to the morgue. It was getting late and the temperature was dropping fast and wouldn't you know the goddamn heater in the cruiser wasn't working.

(to Doreen)

You cold?

(to the audience)

She didn't answer me. She hadn't said much since the last time we made love, since she told me about her kids. I didn't understand how she could have done it, even with the bonds of responsibility, the stress of never having enough money, never having enough time. Even now I allow myself to imagine that I had never married my wife, we had never had our daughters and here's the big fantasy. I live someplace warm, someplace tropical and for a living I fish. I take people out in a boat and I show them where the fish are. I meet people from all walks of life and the only thing we have in common is a yearning to be out on the water with a rod in our hands.

DOREEN

No, I don't.

HANK

Don't what?

DOREEN

I don't fish.

HANK

What?

DOREEN

You asked me if I liked to fish. I don't like to fish. I don't even like to eat fish.

HANK

Oh.

DOREEN

Let's get the coroner's report and get the hell out of here. What are you doing?

HANK

I can't seem to-

DOREEN

What?

HANK

Get my hands off the wheel, they're stuck.

DOREEN

Here, let me help.

HANK

I can't, it's like a cramp.

DOREEN  
 (massaging his hand)  
 It's all right. Here, how's that?

HANK  
 Thank you.

THE CORONER examines The Corpse.

CORONER  
 Oh yeah. Uh huh, look at this.

DOREEN  
 It looks like a bruise.

CORONER  
 Thumb print. Someone squeezed really hard, right there. I'd say the cause of death is thumb squeezing. Broke right through to the back of his neck. I'd say thumb squeezing. Never saw anything like it before. At least it was quick. Snapped his neck like a fox with a squirrel or something like that. Do you know who the fellow is?

HANK  
 No ID on him.

CORONER  
 Smells kind of funny, like hay or poop. Poopy hay, can't quite place it.

HANK  
 Official cause of death then-

CORONER  
 Thumb squeezing. Oh, you might want his clothes. Stuffed with tens, twenties, fifties, hundreds. Nice and crisp, too. He won't have much use for it now.

HANK  
 We can trace the money-

DOREEN  
 He's one of the robbers. Obvious.

CORONER  
 And found this. Think it might be of interest?

Coroner hands Hank a pamphlet.

HANK  
 (reads)  
 "How to start a pizza business from home." Dear God, can you imagine? This must be Tom.

I'll bring him in. DOREEN

Not by yourself. HANK

He's harmless. DOREEN

He's a murderer. HANK

He's still harmless. DOREEN

And he's a bank robber. HANK

How the hell did he rob a bank, kill this guy and buy an iPod at the mall in an hour? DOREEN

Maybe the guy was already dead. HANK

I've got to sit down. DOREEN

It's better this way. He can't take care of himself. He'll go to prison and work in the laundry or the kitchen. HANK

He just doesn't know his own strength. You saw the rabbits, the barrels of dead rabbits and that mother- DOREEN

Look at the snow. HANK

Oh, I hate this time of year. DOREEN

I know. But it's still pretty. Come on, let's go get him. HANK

Don't call it in. Just, let's handle it. DOREEN

What do you mean? HANK

I don't know what I mean. Just want to talk to him first. DOREEN

HANK

All right, we'll talk to him first.

DOREEN

That mother and those horrible cats.

A WOMAN in a red dress enters.  
Hank sees her as if in a dream.

WOMAN

Excuse me?

HANK

Yes?

WOMAN

I'm looking for Exam Room B.

HANK

Oh. This is Exam Room A.

WOMAN

My aunt. She was elderly but still, it was a shock.  
Pneumonia. And Christmas and all.

HANK

I'm sorry.

WOMAN

I look forward to it all year but now, well... Have to get  
home. It's Christmas.

DOREEN

What was that?

HANK

Merry Christmas.

DOREEN

Christmas is in two weeks.

HANK

What?

DOREEN

Who are you talking to?

The Woman exits.

HANK

My mother would be in her fifties now.

DOREEN

Let's go find Buddy.

HANK

I guess I'll always have this picture of her in my head.

DOREEN

Let's go find him.

BUDDY'S MOTHER'S HOUSE

BUDDY'S MOTHER

Well, I ain't seen him, not since the night you drug him over here, eat me out of house and home. Where's your money? And he said Tom took it. Where's Tom? He says he don't know.

HANK

Tom is dead.

BUDDY'S MOTHER

Dead? How is he dead?

HANK

Some kind of accident.

BUDDY'S MOTHER

No kidding, no kidding. Well, I'm not surprised. He was nice enough but hung out with the wrong crew. He and Buddy would get into terrible fights. Well, Buddy always ended up crying, Tom would go down to the bar and wouldn't let Buddy go. Said he ruined his chances with the women and I can tell you that was probably true enough.

DOREEN

Do you know where he might have gone?

BUDDY'S MOTHER

Home, I expect. Tell him not to darken my door until next month when my social security check comes. I can't feed him and theses cats, too. Get down, Precious! Now, that's enough! He's over there with those rabbits. I told him they'd be the end of him one day. Enough to give you nightmares. I hate those pink eyed varmits.

HANK

(to the audience)

We drove over to Buddy's place.

BUDDY'S HOUSE

DOREEN

Buddy?



HANK

(to the audience)

The snow was really coming down now. You could barely see in front of you.

DOREEN

Buddy, are you in there?

HANK

(to the audience)

He had started a fire in the back yard. We would never have even found the front door otherwise.

DOREEN

Buddy, what are you doing?

HANK

(to the audience)

He was burning rabbits.

BUDDY

They're dead, they're all dead. I don't know how but they're all dead.

DOREEN

Some of them were very sick.

BUDDY

I smell something. I smell something bad. Somebody sprayed them. That's the only way this could have happened.

DOREEN

Buddy, we need to talk to you about your car.

BUDDY

I don't have a car.

DOREEN

The car you left at the garage. Buddy, what happened to Tom?

BUDDY

That's Tom's car. I don't have a license. I took the test but they didn't pass me. I drove Tom's car.

HANK

We searched the car and found something very bad.

BUDDY

What?

HANK

Is Tom dead, Buddy?

BUDDY

I don't know. How would I know if he was dead?

DOREEN

Because he is dead. We found him in the trunk of the car and money stuffed in his pockets.

HANK

Did you have a fight with him? Did the two of you have a fight?

BUDDY

I haven't seen him since the day we went to the mall. He said he was going to Owensville, that's what he said. Now I remember. Go to Owensville and you'll find him. He said he was going to find his mother. He said she lived there but he wouldn't take me. He had a big fight with his father and said damn him to hell.

DOREEN

I know people in Owensville. What is Tom's last name?

BUDDY

Knutsen, Tom Knutsen. That's his name and he was going to Owensville.

DOREEN

Oh no.

HANK

What's the matter?

DOREEN

Oh god.

BUDDY

You're very soft.

HANK

Don't touch her.

BUDDY

Like a rabbit. Your hair is so, so soft.

DOREEN

It can't be.

HANK

You killed him, Buddy.

BUDDY

No, I didn't. He just went to Owensville.

DOREEN

I can't stand it.

Hank handcuffs Buddy.

HANK

Buddy Stoddard, you have the right to remain silent. If you give up that right, anything you say can and will be used against you.

BUDDY

That hurts.

HANK

You have the right to an attorney.

DOREEN

Don't you see, don't you know?

HANK

If you can't afford an attorney the court will appoint one for you.

DOREEN

He was my son.

ANOTHER MEMORY

HANK

(to the audience)

Radar. The marriage counselor said people had a certain radar for each other. My mother walked out into the snow one night, went to see a sick friend and got sick herself and died. I spent the rest of my life blaming her, hating her and all she did was go to help a sick friend. Before my father died-

Hank's FATHER enters.

FATHER

Hank, I wish you could find a girl. Someone like your mother. I don't care about grandchildren, I won't live to see them. But if you and your sister die alone, then what was the reason for bringing you into this world? For your mother, God rest her soul, to carry you and bear you and worry about you? She wouldn't even see you before she died, she was so worried about infection.

HANK

(to the audience)

I couldn't forgive her. In my mind, she had abandoned us. I remember a fight that night, my father screaming, my mother crying and then me running into the snow after her.

FATHER

A bad dream, boy. You used to have it night after night. I could never convince you.

HANK

(to the audience)

Watching her slim back as she walked further and further into the night.

FATHER

It never happened. Doris picked her up to go see your poor Aunt Grace. And off she went. Said she'd be home in an hour. By morning she was sickly and a week later she was dead. Pneumonia. Doris never forgave herself.

HANK

Why wouldn't you let us see her at the funeral home?

FATHER

She wouldn't have wanted it. The roses were gone from her cheeks. Do you remember her rosy cheeks, Hank? She had the prettiest roses in her cheeks. No, I wanted you to remember her the way she looked on Christmas eve in her red dress with the holly earrings she wore. You'd think I'd hate Christmas after all that, but I can still see her standing there. She had put a white wool coat on over that red dress and the hem was just peeking out.

DOREEN

(as his wife)

They'll want a story. Oh, I hate leaving you all like this.

FATHER

Don't go.

DOREEN

(as his wife)

Just for an hour. Doris needs to run to the store. Belmain's is open until nine. She'll pick up some things and I'll come right back. Aunt Grace will be happy to see another face. She and Doris get sick of each other and sweetheart, it's Christmas! Give the kids a kiss for me. Tell them that I love them very much and to go right to sleep so Santa can come and do his work. We'll wrap the doll house when I get home. Sarah will go completely out of her mind in the morning.

FATHER

Don't be long.

DOREEN

(as his wife)

What, on Christmas? I'll be right back.

FATHER

Memory is a funny thing. I kept all her clothes, jewelry books, just put them in boxes and then sorted through them a few months ago. I wanted to give you and your sister things, things I thought you'd like. I don't know why I hadn't done it years ago too. Painful, I expect. Anyway, I came to her dresses and I was looking for that red dress. I wanted to put it on a hanger and look at it and damned if there wasn't a red dress to be found. Thought maybe it was at Grace's all these years, so I called her and she said she remembered she showed up in plaid pants Now, I never knew your mother to wear plaid pants but Grace swore it and you'll never guess what. She took out a picture album and there she was at Grace's bedside in those plaid pants. I guess it must be the last picture of her and I thought you might want to have it.

Father exits.

DOREEN'S PLACE

Doreen drinks a tall glass of Scotch. Hank stares at a photograph.

DOREEN

That's your mother? You look like her.

HANK

I don't see it.

DOREEN

The eyes.

HANK

I don't... I guess I don't really remember her.

DOREEN

Well, you're young enough to be my son.

HANK

Glad I'm not.

DOREEN

How can you even stand to be around me?

HANK

Because I love you.

DOREEN

You what?

HANK

I love you.

That's impossible. DOREEN

But it's true. HANK

Well, I don't love you. DOREEN

Okay. HANK

I can't. I don't feel love. I'm not normal. DOREEN

What's normal? We're here, you're in my arms. We've both had a terrible day. HANK

Don't say it. Don't say I lost my son. I lost him twenty-five years ago and if I thought about him at all, it was to imagine him working in a bank with his father, looking like him, acting like him. My son grew up to live with Buddy Stoddard and very likely rob a bank. It's hard to sort out the truth from the fiction with that Buddy but it would appear that Tom robbed the bank, went home to grab some things and Buddy got upset and killed him. And Buddy thought so little about what he did, that he stuffed Tom in the car and drove to the mall and bought an iPod. And you know, it doesn't even mean very much to me. Are you in love now? DOREEN

Shut up. You don't make any sense when you talk. But I watched you when you were sleeping, when your defenses were down and you were just you and I saw through all this crap. HANK

You love me because of the way I look when I sleep? DOREEN

Why not? HANK

Why not? Because. Because you can't. Because if you love me then you're not worth a damn. Oh stop that. Oh oh... Mm... I wish you would- DOREEN

Shut up. HANK

Hank undresses Doreen.

LATER

HANK

(to the audience)

Couples have a sort of radar for each other. Okay, I got that. I connected that when I fell in love with Doreen, I was acting out the abandoned mother syndrome. Only she was the mother who had abandoned her children, so what I need is to say goodbye to my mother. She needs to what ask for forgiveness. Return to them. Accept the past. Stop running. She didn't seem interested in any of that, but she didn't leave me and she said she didn't love me but I knew better. I had seen the tenderness in her face when she was sleeping but there was something else, something that I had missed. Buddy was a different matter. I couldn't get him out of my head. We were done with him, he was in jail. He was going to plead guilty to manslaughter.

BUDDY

Why am I guilty? I didn't do anything.

HANK

(to the audience)

I didn't see him again. We turned him over to homicide.

BUDDY

Are there rabbits in prison?

HANK

(to the audience)

What did I need with Buddy? Why couldn't I get that poor slob out of my head? We were attached somehow. Tom, the car, the goddamn rabbits, Doreen...

(to Doreen)

Don't you feel anything?

DOREEN

What?

HANK

What do you mean, what? We're talking about Tom.

DOREEN

It's not my business.

HANK

He was your son.

DOREEN

So? So I didn't know him. He didn't know me. It's ancient history.

HANK

We're going to his funeral.

DOREEN  
Why?

HANK  
Because that's what you do. That's what you do when your son dies, is killed. And I'm your friend. Your lover. So that's what I do. I go with you.

DOREEN  
I don't want to see them.

HANK  
You don't have to talk to anybody. We'll just sit in the back. But this is important. It's called closure.

DOREEN  
All right.

HANK  
It's a three-hour drive.

DOREEN  
You think I don't know?

HANK  
I don't know what you know.

DOREEN  
There.

HANK  
What's-

Doreen hands Hank a scrapbook.

DOREEN  
I cut out everything I could find every time they moved. I subscribed to the newspaper. Tom played soccer once upon a time.

HANK  
What happened to him?

DOREEN  
I don't know, drugs, pressure. He turned eighteen and he dropped out.

HANK  
I think there was some...

DOREEN  
What?



HANK

Mental illness. They found prescriptions in Buddy's apartment. Lithium, halcion, serax, xanax.

DOREEN

Stop it.

HANK

Manic depressive most likely.

DOREEN

Oh...

HANK

You know how many boys we have locked up that have manic depression?

DOREEN

Not my boy. My boy is dead but I couldn't help him then, I can't help him now, so what's the point?

HANK

Maybe you're the point. Did you ever think of that? Maybe you're worth saving.

DOREEN

For what?

HANK

For me.

DOREEN

Get another mother. I don't want to be one. I don't know how to be anything. I proved that.

HANK

You think any of us come into this world with any idea of what to do? You either want to save the world or jump off it.

DOREEN

What do you want from me?

HANK

You're on my radar so put on your coat and let's go to the funeral.

THE CHURCH

HANK

(to the audience)

It was snowing on the way to Tom's funeral, but we made it on time. Everyone was in their seats.

The minister was poised to speak so when we entered it was as if they had been waiting for us.

SARAH 2 in a light.

HANK

(to the audience)

I spotted Doreen's husband right away, tall and gaunt, back stiff as a board, facing forward. He was the only one who didn't turn his head when we walked in. And seated next to him was a slightly smaller, blonder, prettier and much younger version of Doreen.

Sarah 2 looks around.

HANK

(to the audience)

She must have been about thirty, my sister's age, and I realized when I read the funeral program that Tom and I were born eleven days apart. Yes, she could have been my mother and Sarah... her name was Sarah... like my sister but I didn't make the connection that she could be my sister. All I could think was that I wished she could be my wife.

MINISTER

Let us pray.

HANK

(to the audience)

When she lowered her head to pray, her hair fell away exposing a long white neck and I had a terrible urge to kiss her there. I thought I was losing my mind.

MINISTER

Dear Lord, we are gathered here today to celebrate the life of your servant, Tom Knutsen, who was taken from us in the prime of his young and vital life. Life, life, life, what is it for? What can it all mean when such a tragedy befalls someone with such great promise and character. We all knew him and loved him...

HANK

(to the audience)

She turned her head to look at me and her mother and I realized what I had seen in Doreen's sleeping face that time. I had seen the soul of this angel.

MINISTER

Although he had been away for the past ten years, all of us remember him running up and down that soccer field, the pride and joy of his high school. A hero. A model of sportsmanship and camaraderie. All who knew him, loved him and all who loved him mourn this day.

Sarah 2 stands.

HANK

(to the audience)

I could see that she held a piece of paper, no doubt the speech she intended to give about her poor miserable brother who was lying dead in that box in front of her.

DOREEN

Please, let's leave.

SARAH 2

(to congregation)

I hadn't seen my brother in a couple of years and I just want to say that what I remember the most about him is how much he loved-

HANK

(to the audience)

And that is when she saw Doreen. I mean, really saw her.

SARAH 2

I-

DOREEN

Please.

MINISTER

Go on.

SARAH 2

I don't think I can.

MINISTER

Of course, this is a sad day. Perhaps you'd like someone else to read your speech. Miss Knutsen?

Sarah 2 walks toward Doreen.

DOREEN

I told you this was a bad idea. Let's go.

MINISTER

Now let's turn in our bibles to second Corinthians...

SARAH 2

It's you.

DOREEN

I heard about Tom.

SARAH 2

Won't you stay?

DOREEN  
You're all grown up.

SARAH 2  
You look the same.

DOREEN  
That's impossible.

SARAH 2  
I would have recognized you anywhere.

DOREEN  
Um, this is my co-worker Hank.

HANK  
I'm so sorry for your loss.  
(beat)  
I have a sister named Sarah.  
(beat)  
She doesn't look like you.

SARAH 2  
It's horrible. It's all horrible. That man, that murderer,  
they say he's a monster.

DOREEN  
Just slow. Dim. Developmentally slow.

SARAH 2  
I want to go to the trial. I want to see him.

HANK  
There won't be a trial. He's going to plead guilty to  
manslaughter.

SARAH 2  
Manslaughter. He strangled him.

HANK  
It was an accident.

SARAH 2  
How do you accidentally strangle someone?

HANK  
He's slow and strong. He doesn't know his own strength.

SARAH 2  
Father and Tom had these moods. I was frightened all the time  
and Tom used to tell me stories every night about a mother  
who was kidnapped and couldn't come back and he would devise  
a different ending each time but always it resulted in her  
return. He was looking for you, you know.

Always, always looking. They say he was bi-polar but he had a vision, a dream. Recurring dream and in it you were looking down on him, the snow falling around you.

DOREEN

I have to go.

SARAH 2

Please, you have to stay. Where do you live, how can I see you?

Doreen exits.

HANK

I'll call you. It's just too much for her right now.

SARAH 2

Too much?

HANK

She found him.

SARAH 2

But they said the police...

HANK

Yes.

SARAH 2

Oh, you too.

HANK

Yes.

SARAH 2

They say... we were told he robbed a bank.

HANK

I think he was really confused. It was a sad situation.

SARAH 2

We couldn't find him. We tried. I tried, father... Why do these things happen all my life? I have lived with such sadness and it's Christmas, the worst time of year. My mother walked out on us Christmas eve.

HANK

I have to go.

SARAH 2

Can I see where he lived? If I come, can you take me there?

HANK

It's... Yes, I-

SARAH 2

Please write down your phone number. You promise you'll take my call?

HANK

I promise I'll take your call.

Marriage Counselor enters.

SARAH 2

Here's my number. If you should think of anything. If you should like to talk about anything. I just wish I knew what I did to deserve this life.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Uh oh.

SARAH 2

I want to know what happened that day. I know it sounds crazy, but I just need to know. Please, can you find out? Can you?

HANK

Uh oh, what?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Uh oh, this isn't good. Didn't you see *The Graduate*?

HANK

This is not a comedy.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

You can't pursue this one.

HANK

What about the radar?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Lesson over. Whatever you were supposed to learn from this experience, move on. Do not, I repeat, do not get involved with that girl.

HANK

I think I love her.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

You love her mother.

HANK

(to audience)

The girl, Sarah, was on my radar. I just didn't know it. I got confused.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

You cannot sleep with both of them. One of you or all of you will be doomed to die. It's the order of the universe, no exceptions. I'm telling you to listen to me.

DOREEN

I'm leaving. I'm not waiting.

HANK

(to the audience)

We were all doomed of course, from the beginning, from before the beginning. Someone once told me that we choose our suffering and I hope he's right. I hope that when this is over, we really do walk off the stage and fall laughing into each other's arms. Wasn't that a hoot? Did you see the way he drove her crazy? What about that misery, loneliness, bankruptcy, disillusionment, tears, sickness, mouth sores. Wasn't that a blast? Didn't we pull that off in style?

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

It's your funeral.

SCENE 11

And now Sarah...

HANK

(to the audience)

I drove Doreen home. Three hours in a blizzard and then turned around.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

I simply cannot watch this.

HANK

I don't need any advice from you.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

She's already broken. She's like a broken doll.

HANK

Plenty of kids grow up without a mother.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

She needs somebody. It's just not you.

HANK

Get out.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

This won't look good with the court.

HANK

I said get out.

Marriage Counselor exits.

SARAH'S PLACE

HANK

(to the audience)

I knew where she lived. One of the perks of being a cop, you can find out just about anything about anybody. So I drove up to her house.

SARAH 2

Oh, it's you.

HANK

(to audience)

I told her I had forgotten my hat at the church.

SARAH 2

I could call the minister.

HANK

(to the audience)

I got a room at an inn. I told her the roads were simply too dangerous to return tonight. I noticed she was wearing blue fluffy slippers.

SARAH 2

Won't you come in? Won't you please come in out of that weather?

HANK

(to the audience)

And it was really that simple.

SARAH 2

I was just reheating some soup. Would you care to join me?

HANK

(to the audience)

She had decorated for Christmas the way some people do. Ornaments she had collected since childhood, a tree in the window and honest to God real candles lit in the branches.

SARAH 2

Oh, I know it's a fire hazard but I'm very careful I only light them for an hour or so just at dark. I was just about to blow them out. Would you like to do that while I set the table? And oh, I've poached a fish.



HANK

(to the audience)

I stared into the firelight and listened as she moved around in the kitchen and the dining room. She lit candles on the table. I could hear the hiss of the match and I turned just as she slipped from my view, the rustle of her funeral dress, and the click of her heels. She had found her shoes, she had dressed back up just for me.

SARAH 2

And a salad.

HANK

(to the audience)

I blew out the last of the candles and came to the table. She had placed a vase of chrysanthemums in the center and sat opposite me.

(to Sarah)

The house looks beautiful.

SARAH 2

I've always loved Christmas. Tommy, Tom... how he hated to be called Tommy. Tom and I made a pact a long time ago that we would always keep Christmas special no matter... I'm sorry.

HANK

No, please it's my fault. Of course this must be impossibly hard.

SARAH 2

You being here helps. Company is nice.

HANK

I wish I had brought a bottle of wine.

SARAH 2

Oh, I have one. Would you like a glass?

HANK

Maybe after dinner. Maybe we'll relight the candles on the tree.

SARAH 2

That's what we'll do. What are you doing for Christmas?

HANK

What am I doing? What am I doing? I don't have any plans.

SARAH 2

Oh.

HANK

My kids are away, will be away with their mother. We'll have Christmas later but for this coming December 25 26 27 29 29 30 31.. I don't have any plans at all.

SARAH 2

Oh.

HANK

This fish is very good.

Hank steps outside the scene.

HANK

(to the audience)

We watched the candles safely burn down and I put on my coat and went to the inn and stared at the walls until morning. When I went out to my car there was a note on my windshield.

SARAH 2

I checked the church and there was no sign of your hat.

HANK

(to the audience)

I had forgotten the lie.

SARAH 2

But we'll put a notice in the bulletin this Sunday and then next week, next Sunday.

HANK

(to the audience)

This was the best part.

SARAH 2

Next Sunday is Christmas and if you're not doing anything, why don't you come to dinner?

HANK

(to the audience)

I folded the note to put it away and saw that she had written something else on the back.

SARAH 2

I would like to write to this Buddy. I would like to ask him about Tom. If you could please see about this for me, I would be more than grateful.

HANK

(to the audience)

I would do anything for her, of course, even take her by the hand and lead her into the gates of hell.

## BUDDY'S CELL

BUDDY

(calling)

I'm cold. Can I have another blanket? This one has holes. I shivered last night all night and couldn't sleep. I get tired when I don't sleep. Can you please bring me one? My mother said she would but she hasn't had time yet.

Hank enters.

HANK

Hi, Buddy.

BUDDY

Hank, Hank, Hank, they won't bring me another blanket. This one has holes.

HANK

I'll talk to them.

BUDDY

No, they won't do it and I can't sleep. I get tired when I can't sleep.

HANK

I'll bring you a blanket.

BUDDY

I don't like it in here. Am I punished enough yet? Can I go home?

HANK

I don't think you're going home for a while, Buddy.

BUDDY

Tom is going to wonder where I am and my rabbits... Oh Hank, I'm so worried about my rabbits.

HANK

Remember I told you they all went to good homes.

BUDDY

Oh yeah, but can I have them back when I get out?

HANK

Of course you can.

BUDDY

You have all the addresses?

HANK

I have it at the office, Buddy.

BUDDY

You're a good friend, Hank. Thank you. Can you tell Tom to bring me a blanket?

HANK

I'll tell him.

BUDDY

What's that?

HANK

It's a present. It's a Christmas present.

BUDDY

For me?

HANK

Sure.

BUDDY

Can I open it?

HANK

Sure.

BUDDY

Oh, I love presents. I love the wrapping paper. Did you wrap this, Hank?

HANK

The lady at the store did.

BUDDY

Mm, smells good. She wears perfume.  
(He unwraps a stuffed  
rabbit.)

Oh my, oh, oh, oh, thank you, thank you.

HANK

Your welcome.

BUDDY

It looks just like Alice and soft, so, so soft. I love soft things, do you?

HANK

I'm glad you like it

BUDDY

I'm going to keep and sleep with it. Can you get me another blanket, Hank? I'm cold at night and I don't sleep good and I'm tired when I don't sleep.

HANK

I told you, yes. I'm going to get you a blanket. Buddy, Buddy do you want to tell me about Tom?

BUDDY

Tom is my roommate.

HANK

I know, but what else can you tell me about him?

BUDDY

Tom and I are going to open a pizzeria. We're going to get fifteen thousand dollars. Sometimes Tom gets mad and says he's going to do it without me when I'm a knucklehead. I shouldn't have bought the iPod with my social security money and then those boys took it. They took my iPod and I lost my car keys.

HANK

And what happened that day? What happened with Tom? It's okay for you to tell me. Do you know why? Because I know his sister and she wants you to know she won't be mad. I told her about you and she said you sounded like a very nice person.

BUDDY

She did?

HANK

And she's really pretty, too. Do you want to see a picture?

BUDDY

Oh yes, yes I do.

HANK

Here this is what she looks like.

BUDDY

She's pretty. She's beautiful and pretty. Is she soft?

HANK

I imagine she's soft.

BUDDY

I like yellow hair almost as much as I like white hair.

HANK

She very much wants to know about her brother. She wants to write to you, maybe even talk to you.

BUDDY

Can I meet her?

HANK

Maybe eventually. She's very sad right now because of Tom. When people die their relatives always want to know the details. They need to know. It's a way to make them stop being sad. This pretty girl is sad right now and she will feel better if she knows what happened to Tom that day.

BUDDY

Tom is going to open a pizzeria. He's going to call it Tom and Buddy's Place.

HANK

Tom is dead, Buddy.

BUDDY

I know he's dead! I know he's dead! I'm not stupid. You already told me he was dead five times.

HANK

Why did you kill him?

BUDDY

Now you're really talking stupid. Stupid. Why would I kill my friend that I was going to open a pizzeria with? Why would even a stupid person do that?

HANK

Did you have an argument that day?

BUDDY

I don't want to talk any more.

HANK

This girl. Her name is Sarah. She would like to know what happened to her brother. She's very sad now.

BUDDY

This girl is sad?

HANK

Yes.

BUDDY

She doesn't look sad.

HANK

She's smiling in that picture, but she's very, very sad.

BUDDY

Tom said not to tell. No matter what not to tell.

HANK

You can tell me, Buddy.

BUDDY  
Tom is dead, right?

HANK  
Tom is dead.

BUDDY  
He came home with those two boys.

HANK  
What two boys?

BUDDY  
The boys that took my iPod. Tom and these boys told me to get in the car so I went and then they came and told me to drive to the mall and then they left me and I was supposed to say we were all there all the time in case anybody asked. So I bought my iPod and when I came out they were waiting in the car and they said, "Where were we today?" And I said, "We were in the mall." And then I said, "Where's Tom?" And they said he was making a deposit at the bank and then I got mad.

HANK  
Why did you get mad?

BUDDY  
Because I knew Tom wasn't making a deposit. Tom doesn't have a bank account. You know what I think, Hank? I think they robbed a bank that day, that's what I think and you know why?

HANK  
Why, Buddy?

BUDDY  
Because they had all this money stuffed in their pockets.

HANK  
Buddy, there's a tape of the robbery. We can see that it's you wearing a mask.

BUDDY  
I'm wearing a mask?

Hank shows Buddy a picture.

BUDDY  
That's Jimmy wearing a mask.

HANK  
Jimmy?

BUDDY

He's big and I mean b-i-i-i-i-g. Look, I have a picture. They let me keep my pictures. There's Tom and me and there's Jimmy.

HANK

He's big.

BUDDY

That's because he works on a farm. Do you know he can lift part of a cow all by himself? And you know what else? I know it's not nice to say. But he's kind of dumb. Kind of a dumbbell. That's not nice to say.

HANK

(to the audience)

I could have left it at that. The story didn't make any sense, but nothing Buddy ever said made sense. But if there was one thing I had learned in my years on the police force, it was to know when someone was lying and this poor slob didn't have the faintest clue how to lie. In the end for him it didn't matter. He wasn't going to live a normal life no matter what I did. He was in my range, on my radar and we were all destined to go down together. This dumb bell pulled us all down with him.

DOREEN'S PLACE

Radar Range.

DOREEN

How do I look?

HANK

(to the audience)

I was picking up Doreen at her place. She looked, well... she looked...

DOREEN

I'm nervous.

HANK

(to the audience)

She looked old enough to be my mother.

(to Doreen)

You shouldn't be. She's a wonderful girl. I imagine she's just like you were

DOREEN

I was never like her, calm, accepting. I mean, maybe from the outside but inside I was always scheming, always trying to stay one step ahead of someone. God, it wore me out.



You know, I barely remember her. I remember Tom, he was older, more involved. I guess Sarah was like a little doll. You wound her up and she said all the right things. I don't even know what I'm saying. I just remember thinking she was a doll that I played with. I didn't really have the faintest idea what to do with her. I had a sense of boys, a man's world, how things worked in it. But I lost my own mother when I was young so I was always immersed in my father, what he needed, then Harold and then Tom. Sarah's lost to me. I don't understand her now and I didn't understand her then, but I can see that she's very, very kind. Much kinder than I ever was. She's deeply kind and soft.

HANK

She seems like a wonderful person.

DOREEN

Yes.

HANK

Soft and kind, yes.

Doreen puts her arms around  
Hank's neck and kisses him.

HANK

Sarah will be here any minute-

DOREEN

A quickie. Remember how we love quickies?

HANK

Yes, but that's only when I'm feeling quick.

DOREEN

Maybe this will help.

Doreen continues to try and make  
love. Hank pulls away and looks  
out a window.

HANK

Doreen-

DOREEN

I don't care-

HANK

But she'll know-

DOREEN

I don't care what she knows. This is my life.

HANK

What's the matter with you?

DOREEN

What's the matter with you? Normally you can't keep your hands off me. Oh my God. You're in love with her.

HANK

I'm what?

DOREEN

In love with her.

HANK

I don't even know her.

DOREEN

You don't know her but I know enough about men to know that look. Well, well. Isn't that funny. Isn't that the funniest thing in the world.

HANK

You're jumping to conclusions.

DOREEN

And not once have you said no, I don't love her, I love you.

HANK

We are not having this conversation. We are waiting for Sarah to take her to meet Buddy so she can see for herself where he lived and where he died.

DOREEN

It's all right, you know.

HANK

What's all right?

DOREEN

Whatever. I won't say anything to her about us.

HANK

There is nothing, no reason.

DOREEN

Look, it's been fun but it didn't mean anything. God, I almost said you're young enough to be my son. Well, well maybe you'll be my son-in-law except it won't matter because I'm leaving. This was never meant to be. We were never meant to be. I'm not cut out to be a mother-in-law, or a grandmother or for that matter. Certainly not a wife.

HANK

Look, I don't have to go with you.

DOREEN

Oh, but you do you do. You started all this. You're going to finish it.

HANK

She's late. Maybe she's not coming.

DOREEN

I texted her Buddy's address. I told her to meet us at there.

HANK

What?

DOREEN

I thought they should have a little time to talk, just the two of them.

BUDDY'S PLACE, TOO

Buddy and Sarah 2 in a light.  
Sarah wears a red dress. And  
that's how it happened.

SARAH 2

Hello, are you...?

BUDDY

You're the girl in the picture. Do you like rabbits?

SARAH 2

I do. I love rabbits. Why, do you have rabbits?

SARAH 2

My name is Sarah and you are-

HANK

Buddy.

Buddy carefully moves toward  
Sarah 2.

DOREEN

You wanted the truth. Right, well here's the truth.

BUDDY

I don't have rabbits anymore, but I'm going to get a pet rat.  
Do you like rats?

DOREEN  
I don't need her and I don't need you. I should have put that pillow to their faces. I should have murdered them in their sleep.

SARAH 2  
Not particularly, although I know they can be sweet. Are Hank and Doreen here yet? I'm supposed to meet them here.

BUDDY  
I like your dress.

DOREEN  
Where are you going?

Hank runs.

SARAH 2  
Thank you. It was my mother's.

DOREEN  
You said you loved me! You said you loved... me!

BUDDY  
Red is my favorite color. Do you want to see something?

What?

SARAH 2

In here. Look.

BUDDY

Are those-

SARAH 2

Hank in slow motion. He tries to reach Sarah 2.

BUDDY  
Rabbit pelts. I skinned them myself after my rabbits died. Sometimes they died on accident. I would skin them with my knife and put them in here. I like to touch things that are soft.

SARAH 2  
I'm going to wait outside. I think that's what Hank said to do, was to wait outside until he came. He's a police officer.

BUDDY  
(his hand on her arm)  
I know who Hank is.

SARAH 2  
And Doreen, do you know her? She's my mother. She cares a lot about me.

BUDDY  
She's pretty but not as pretty as you are.

SARAH 2  
I would like to go outside now.

BUDDY

I want you to feel my rabbit skin.

SARAH 2

Please-

BUDDY

You have very soft hair. I like yellow hair a lot.

SARAH 2

Please let go of me.

BUDDY

I just want to touch the softness of your hair.

SARAH 2

Please.

BUDDY

(crushing her)

Soft.

SARAH 2

Oh...

BUDDY

Soft soft soft soft...

SARAH 2

No please... no... aah aaaaaaah...

And Sarah 2 is dead.

THE CITY STREET

HANK

(to the audience)

When I had dinner with Sarah that night I found out all kinds of wonderful things. She had almost gotten married once, but a respectable amount of time before the ceremony she called it off. She just decided she didn't love him enough. She was going to wait for the right person. She wasn't going to settle for anyone. That's what she suspected her mother did. But I didn't want to talk about her mother. I wanted to know about her.

SARAH 2

I cry at movies. Happy movies, sad movies, action movies. Something about all those characters wanting so much. What is it to want things so much? Is that what life is supposed to be like? I would like to think so.

HANK

(to the audience)

I imagine that I introduce her to my daughters, Jenny and Sarah. Yes, in my mind I have named one of my daughters Sarah after my sister, after this Sarah who I would one day meet and love and marry and live happily ever after with. And they love her, too. Somehow they're not jealous. They accept her and in my mind my ex-wife falls off a cliff and Sarah and me and Jenny and Sarah...

SARAH 2

Can I tell you girls about the first time I met your father? He was standing on a street corner, the snow falling all around us and I was carrying these brightly colored packages. Of course, it was Christmas, the most magical and wonderful-

HANK

(to the audience)

We walk along the marketplace and the lights are brilliant and the snow is falling all around us and music... Music is piped through the street. *Have yourself a merry little Christmas.* And I have never been so happy, so content. It's enough for once, it's finally enough just to be alive and breathe the air and be in love.

SARAH 2

I know this time of year is hard for you, so let's make a pact. Let's make a pact that it is going to be special for us. You know those plastic bubbles filled with pretend snow and a Christmas scene? That is going to be us in a bubble, in our own world and nothing can interfere, nothing that came before, nothing that lies ahead.

HANK

(to the audience)

Who is to say that love can't be like that? Who is to say that it has to end in tragedy? If I dream hard and long enough... Yes, yes we are on that street and the snow has caught on her eyelashes and in fifteen minutes we'll be in front of a fire and the kids will come downstairs and if I look out the window, just turn my head out of the corner of my eye, I'll see my mother coming up the drive, running up the drive in that red dress.

DOREEN

(as his mother)

Oh, sweetheart, sweetheart! It's cold out there. Brrr! Your Aunt Grace, my goodness what a scare I had. But she's better, she's all better and you had better get to bed. It's Christmas Eve! Goodness sake, you think Santa Claus is going to come while you're still up?

HANK

(to the audience)

I hear her voice and it tinkles like the music in the street. She is here, she is there, she is everywhere.

BUDDY

(as Santa Claus)

Ho ho ho, Merry Christmas! Come on there, sit on Santa's lap. Have you been a good little boy this year?

HANK

(to the audience)

I thought I could look into someone's eyes and see the truth. I always prided myself on my ability to see through to the other side, but now it's simply more convenient for me to make up my own truth. But then, don't we all?

CITIZEN

Evening, Officer. Cold enough for you?

HANK

I like the cold.

CITIZEN

Well, Merry Christmas. You all right?

HANK

Fine. You need a hand with that?

CITIZEN

No, no. Thanks for asking. It's the funniest thing. I always wait until Christmas eve to buy presents for my kids. I always think I'm going to shop early, but I never do. But...

HANK

What?

CITIZEN

It makes it more special somehow.

HANK

(to the audience)

The snow is falling and I can see shapes in the darkness, but I can't quite make them out. Perhaps they are coming for me. Perhaps they have come and gone. Love is like that, shapes in the darkness. I make of it what I will.

THE END